



November 18, 2024

The Honorable Dane White
Mayor, City of Escondido
201 North Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025

RE: EXTENSION OF INTERIM URGENCY ORDINANCE PROHIBITING NEW COMMERCIAL BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS WITHIN THE CITY OF ESCONDIDO

Dear Mayor White,

The undersigned stakeholders write to you regarding the proposed extension of the current interim urgency ordinance prohibiting new commercial battery energy storage systems (BESS) in the City of Escondido. We represent a diverse group of stakeholders who believe BESS projects are critical in meeting our region's climate goals while providing reliable and affordable energy to residential neighborhoods, small businesses, and more.

We are in strong opposition to the proposed extension of the current ordinance and urge the Council to vote no on any legislation that prohibits BESS projects in the San Diego region.

BESS projects throughout the State of California are necessary in preventing blackouts, brownouts, and public safety power shutoffs when energy is in high demand, like on sweltering summer days when air-conditioning units are in use. With more electric vehicles and all-electric buildings joining California's energy grid, grid resilience must be at the center of our conversations. BESS projects contribute significantly to grid stabilization and guarantee a continuous supply of clean energy, thereby decreasing dependence on fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, BESS are essential to ensuring residents across the county have access to reliable power sources, needed for business and residents alike. Escondido's own climate action goals would likely require the development and deployment of local BESS projects.

These projects also create local green jobs in a multitude of sectors and have other positive economic opportunities, including new tax revenue to their respective jurisdictions. Any potential moratorium on BESS projects would have a dramatic impact on the economy, stymying our regional supply chain involved in BESS, solar, and photovoltaic (PV) industries. This has the potential to cause our region to lose important manufacturing, engineering, and electrical jobs that employ thousands of San Diegans.

Safety of residents is a top concern of our coalition, and we understand the fear or discomfort modern technologies can cause in communities. That is why we are supportive of federal guidelines and the 2022 California Fire Code regulations (Section 1207: Electrical Energy Storage Systems), which has also been adopted by the County of San Diego. Additionally, the County of San Diego Fire Protection District recently released a "BESS Best Practices" report that we believe could be implemented in place of a moratorium. BESS developed in 2024 are almost exclusively developed in purpose-built outdoor BESS enclosures (as opposed to systems developed in warehouses)

– these newer systems are designed with robust safety protocols including fire propagation control, thermal management systems, automatic shutoff technology, physical barriers, and 24/7 real-time monitoring. Experts and fire officials also regularly inspect these systems.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss any questions or concerns you or Escondido Councilmembers may have and hope the City of Escondido will collaborate with us to strengthen our grid, create new jobs, and invest in our local economy. You may reach out to Justine Murray (jmurray@sdchamber.org), Executive Director of Public Affairs, at the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, to connect with the undersigned stakeholders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Justine Murray
Executive Director of Public Affairs
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce



Jeremy Abrams
Business Manager
IBEW 569



Jason Anderson
President & CEO
Cleantech San Diego



Corinne Lytle Bonine, PMP
Director, Permitting – Wind & West
AES Clean Energy | The AES Corporation



Serena Pelka
Policy Advocate
Climate Action Campaign

CC:

Honorable Deputy Mayor Christian Garcia
Honorable Councilmember Consuelo Martinez
Honorable Councilmember Joe Garcia
Honorable Councilmember Michael Morasco
Economic Development Director Jennifer Schoeneck
City Manager Sean McGlynn
City Attorney Michael R. McGuinness